

# PART I

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## TEN STEPS TO IMPROVING COLLEGE READING SKILLS

提高大学英语阅读技巧  
的十个步骤





In each sentence above, the **context**—the words surrounding the unfamiliar word—provides clues to the word’s meaning. You may have guessed from the context that *ambivalent* means “mixed,” that *ascertain* means “find out,” and that *incessant* is “nonstop.”

Using context clues to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words will help you in several ways:

- It will save you time when reading. You will not have to stop to look up words in the dictionary. (Of course, you won’t always be able to understand a word from its context, so you should always have a dictionary nearby as you read.)
- After you figure out the meaning of the same word more than once through its context, it may become a part of your working vocabulary. You will therefore add to your vocabulary simply by reading thoughtfully.
- You will get a good sense of how a word is actually used, including any shades of meaning it might have.

在上面每句中，语境（即生词前后的那些单词）为推测生词的意思提供了线索。根据语境的提示来理解生词对你有以下帮助：

- 可以节省你的阅读时间。你不必停下来查词典。（当然，不是所有的生词都能通过语境弄懂，所以阅读时手边一定要有本词典。）
- 如果你已经多次通过语境猜出了某个词的意思，那么这个词也就成了你正在使用的词汇的一部分。所以通过认真阅读就能增加你的词汇量。
- 培养好的语感，从而了解单词的实际用法和一些可能存在的意义上的细微差别。

## TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES 语境提示的四种线索

There are four common types of context clues:

- 1 Examples 例子
- 2 Synonyms 同义词
- 3 Antonyms 反义词
- 4 General Sense of the Sentence or Passage 语句或语篇的大意

In the following sections, you will read about and practice using each type. The practices will sharpen your skills in recognizing and using context clues. They will also help you add new words to your vocabulary.

Remember not to use a dictionary for these practices. Their purpose is to help you develop the skill of figuring out what words mean without using a dictionary.

### 1 Examples 例子

Examples may suggest the meaning of an unknown word. To understand how this type of clue works, read the sentences below. An *italicized* word in each sentence is followed by examples that serve as context clues for that word. These examples, in **bold-**

**aced** type, will help you figure out the meaning of each word. On the answer line, write the letter of each meaning you think is correct.

Note that examples are often introduced with signal words and phrases like *for example*, *for instance*, *including*, and *such as*.

例子可能会暗示生词的意思。阅读下面的例句，看看应该如何利用这类线索。每个斜体词后面紧跟着能帮助理解该词的例子。这些例子已用黑体标出。

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. *Nocturnal* creatures, such as **bats and owls**, have highly developed senses that enable them to function in the dark.

*Nocturnal* means

- A. feathery.                      B. living.                      C. active at night.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The *adverse* effects of this drug, including **dizziness, nausea, and headaches**, have caused it to be withdrawn from the market.

*Adverse* means

- A. deadly.                      B. harmful.                      C. expensive.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Instances of common *euphemisms* include “**final resting place**” (for *grave*), “**intoxicated**” (for *drunk*), and “**restroom**” (for *toilet*).

*Euphemisms* means

- A. unpleasant reactions.  
B. answers.  
C. substitutes for offensive terms.

In the first sentence, the examples given of nocturnal creatures—bats and owls—may have helped you to guess that *nocturnal* creatures are those that are “active at night,” since bats and owls do come out at night. In the second sentence, the unpleasant side effects mentioned are clues to the meaning of *adverse*, which is “harmful.” Finally, as the examples in sentence three indicate, *euphemisms* means “substitutes for offensive terms.”

第一句中给出的 *nocturnal creatures* 的例子——蝙蝠和猫头鹰——能帮助你猜出 *nocturnal* 一词的意思是“夜间活动的”，因为蝙蝠和猫头鹰通常都是晚上出来活动；第二句中提到的各种“令人不愉快的副作用”是对单词 *adverse*（有害的）的提示；第三句中的例子则表明 *euphemism* 意思是“委婉说法”。

### ➤ Practice 1: Examples

For each item below, underline the examples that suggest the meaning of the italicized term. Then write the letter of the meaning of that term on the answer line. Note that the last five sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Even presidents must perform such *mundane* activities as brushing their teeth and washing their hands and faces.

*Mundane* means

- A. pleasant.                      B. ordinary.                      C. expensive.

**Hint:** For this and all the exercises in this chapter, actually insert into the sentence the word you think is the answer. For example, substitute *pleasant* or *commonplace* or *expensive* in to the sentence in place of *mundane* to see which one fits.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Today was a day of *turmoil* at work. The phones were constantly ringing, people were running back and forth, and several offices were being painted.

*Turmoil* means

- A. discussion.                      B. confusion.                      C. harmony.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Some animals have remarkable *longevity*. For example, the giant land tortoise can live several hundred years.

*Longevity* means

- A. appearances.                      B. length of life.                      C. habits.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Before the invention of television, people spent more time on *diversions* such as going to town concerts and ball games, visiting neighborhood friends, and playing board games.

*Diversions* means

- A. amusements.                      B. differences.                      C. chores.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Since my grandfather retired, he has developed several new *avocations*. For instance, he now enjoys gardening and long-distance bike riding.

*Avocations* means

- A. hobbies.                      B. vacations.                      C. jobs.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Children who move to a foreign country *adapt* much more easily than their parents, soon picking up the language and customs of their new home.

*Adapt* means

- A. adjust.                      B. struggle.                      C. become bored.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The police officer was trying to deal with two *distraught* people at once—a trembling mugging victim and a crying lost child.

*Distraught* means

- A. very troubled.                      B. unhealthy.                      C. reasonable.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Changes in such abilities as learning, reasoning, thinking, and language are aspects of *cognitive* development.

*Cognitive* means

- A. physical.                      B. mental.                      C. spiritual.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Some mentally ill people have *bizarre* ideas. For instance, they may think the TV is talking to them or that others can steal their thoughts.

*Bizarre* means

- A. limited.                      B. ordinary.                      C. odd.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. *White-collar crime*—for example, accepting a bribe from a customer or stealing from an employer—is more costly than “common” crime.

*White-collar crime* means crime committed by

- A. gang members.      B. strangers.                      C. people in the workplace.

## 2 Synonyms 同义词

A context clue is often available in the form of a **synonym**: a word that means the same or almost the same as the unknown word. A synonym may appear anywhere in a passage to provide the same meaning as the unknown word.

In each of the following items, the word to be defined is italicized. Underline the synonym for the italicized word in each sentence.

语境提示还经常以同义词的形式出现。同义词，即与生词意思相同或相近的词，可能会出现在段落中的任何地方。

1. Fresh garlic may not *enhance* the breath, but it certainly does improve spaghetti sauce.
2. As soon as I made a *flippant* remark to my boss, I regretted sounding so disrespectful.
3. Although the salesperson tried to *assuage* the angry customer, there was no way to soothe her.

In each sentence, the synonym given should have helped you understand the meaning of the word in italics:

- *Enhance* means “improve.”
- *Flippant* means “disrespectful.”
- *Assuage* means “soothe.”

### ➤ Practice 2: Synonyms

Each item below includes a word that is a synonym of the italicized word. Write the synonym of the italicized word in the space provided. Note that the last five sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Speaking in front of a group *disconcerts* Alan. Even answering a question in class embarrasses him.

**Hint:** How does Alan react when he has to speak in public?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Because my friends had advised me to *scrutinize* the lease, I took time to examine all the fine print.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The presidential candidate vowed to discuss *pragmatic* solutions. He said the American people want practical answers, not empty theory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I asked the instructor to explain a confusing passage in the textbook. She said, "I wish I could, but it's *obscure* to me, too."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Teachers may overlook it when a student is two minutes late. But they are not going to *condone* someone's walking into class a half hour late.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When people are broke, they find that many things which seem *indispensable* are not so necessary after all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Managers should beware of having *adversaries* work together; opponents often do not cooperate well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. In the same way that the arrival of mechanical equipment meant fewer farm jobs, the *advent* of the computer has led to fewer manufacturing jobs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Many corporations like to be seen as *benevolent* and will actively seek publicity for their charitable donations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Throughout history, the *prevalent* authority pattern in families has been patriarchy, in which males are in control. In only a few societies has matriarchy been the customary authority pattern.

### 3 Antonyms 反义词

An **antonym**—a word that means the opposite of another word—is also a useful context clue. Antonyms are often signaled by words and phrases such as *however*, *but*, *yet*, *on the other hand*, and *in contrast*.

In each sentence below, underline the word that means the opposite of the italicized word. Then, on the answer line, write the letter of the meaning of the italicized word.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Many people have pointed out the harmful effects that a working mother may have on the family, yet there are many *salutary* effects as well.

*Salutary* means

- A. well-known.      B. beneficial.      C. hurtful.

反义词，即和另一个词意思相反的词，也是一种很有帮助的语境线索。反义词通常由however、but、yet、on the other hand、in contrast等词或短语引出。

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Trying to control everything your teens do can *impede* their growth. To advance their development, allow them to make some decisions on their own.

*Impede* means

- A. block.                      B. predict.                      C. improve.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. During their training, police officers must respond to *simulated* emergencies in preparation for dealing with real ones.

*Simulated* means

- A. made-up.                      B. mild.                      C. actual.

In the first sentence, salutary effects are the opposite of “harmful effects,” so *salutary* means “beneficial.” In the second sentence, *impede* is the opposite of “advance,” so *impede* means “block.” Last, the opposite of “real” is “simulated”; *simulated* means “made-up.”

第一句中，salutary effects 和 harmful effects 的意义相反，所以由此可以推测 salutary 的意思是“beneficial”（有益的）；第二句中，impede 和 advance 意思相反，所以可以推测出 impede 意义为“block”（阻拦）；第三句中，simulated 和 real 意义相反，所以由此可以推测出 simulated 意思为“made-up”（人造的，假的）。

### ➤ Practice 3: Antonyms

Each item below includes a word that is an antonym of the italicized word. Underline the antonym of each italicized word. Then, on the answer line, write the letter of the meaning of the italicized word. Note that the last five sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Many politicians do not give *succinct* answers. They prefer long ones that help them avoid the point.

**Hint:** If politicians prefer to give long answers, what kind of answer do they usually *not* give?

*Succinct* means

- A. brief.                      B. accurate.                      C. complete.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Although investments in the stock market can be *lucrative*, they can also result in great financial loss.

*Lucrative* means

- A. required.                      B. financially rewarding.                      C. risky.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. “I’ve seen students *surreptitiously* check answer sheets during exams,” said the professor. “However, until today I never saw one openly lay out a cheat sheet on his desk.”

*Surreptitiously* means

- A. legally.                      B. secretly.                      C. loudly.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. While Melba's apartment is decorated plainly, her clothing is very *flamboyant*.  
*Flamboyant* means  
A. inexpensive.                      B. flashy.                      C. washable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. To keep healthy, older people need to stay active. Remaining *stagnant* results in loss of strength and health.  
*Stagnant* means  
A. inactive.                      B. lively.                      C. unhealthy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. In formal communication, be sure to avoid *ambiguous* language. Clear language prevents confusion.  
*Ambiguous* means  
A. wordy.                      B. ineffective.                      C. unclear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Being raised with conflicting values can be a *detriment* to boys' and girls' relationships with each other. In contrast, shared values can be a benefit.  
*Detriment* means  
A. improvement.                      B. harm.                      C. relationship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. While houses and antiques often increase in value, most things, such as cars and TV's, *depreciate*.  
*Depreciate* means  
A. remain useful.                      B. lose value.                      C. break.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Reliable scientific theories are based not upon careless work, but rather upon *meticulous* research and experimentation.  
*Meticulous* means  
A. hasty.                      B. expensive.                      C. careful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. In the early days of automobile manufacturing, *stringent* laws controlled motorists' speed. In contrast, the laws designed to protect consumers from faulty products were extremely weak.  
*Stringent* means  
A. informal.                      B. not effective.                      C. strict.